

Rachael DeLeon (00:04):

Welcome to Real Money, Real Experts, where we bring you interviews with leading financial professionals, sharing their stories, their challenges, and their advice for helping people manage money in the real world. I'm your host, Rachel DeLeon, Executive Director of the Association for Financial Counseling and Planning Education, or A-F-C-P-E.

Dr. Brandy Baxter (00:26):

And I'm your co-host, Dr. Brandy Baxter, accredited financial counselor, A-F-C-P-E member, and your 2025 A-F-C-P-E Board President. On every episode, we take a deep dive into the topics and stories that you care about the most, helping clients, building community, and growing in your work and your career.

Rachael DeLeon (00:50):

Colleen Salchow is a dedicated United States Marine Corps spouse and a proud mother of two with the Strong Educational Foundation. As a former special education teacher, Colleen has transitioned her expertise to empower her clients to take control of their financial futures. She has worked virtually and in person crafting personalized strategies, aligning with each client's unique financial aspirations. She is pursuing new employment opportunities as her family will move to their next duty station in Quantico, Virginia in the summer of 2025. With five years of teaching experience and a master's degree in counseling, Colleen excels in guiding teens and young adults to establish and maintain healthy financial habits for a lifelong success. In 2023, she became an accredited financial counselor, solidifying her commitment to excellence and financial education. In her free time, Colleen embraces the outdoors through hiking, enjoys the thrill of finding treasures and thrift stores, and has recently embarked on a journey to learn, knitting her passion for helping others and her dedication to personal growth make her a remarkable ally in navigating the world of personal finance. Welcome, Colleen.

Dr. Brandy Baxter (02:09):

Oh my gosh. Listening to your bio, I was like, I can so relate to this, having been a military spouse myself and raising kiddos, so I can only imagine the different things that you have learned along the way in this journey. But as you think about specifically your role as a military spouse and PCSing from here to there, what are some of the financial lessons that you've learned along the way?

Colleen Salchow (02:36):

The importance of having a fully funded emergency fund during these transitions from base to base is so important for military families because there are so many unknowns when we are going from, you know, some, and sometimes we are going to different countries. In 2021, we PCs from California's Camp Pendleton here to South Carolina. We literally drove coast to coast, and at that point we lived on Camp Pendleton in public private venture housing. And our washing machine that we had to provide, it was the only appliance we had to provide malfunctioned in January of 2021, and it flooded the entire first floor. And we called like maintenance Lincoln Military Housing. We're like, here's the situation, you know, here's our runner's insurance, yada, yada, yada. Come to find out our USA runner's insurance didn't cover that flood. And Lincoln Military Housing was like, okay, so like, you're gonna be responsible for that bill. And we're like, okay, well what is it? And they're like, \$14,000. I'm like, what? What? Oh gosh. Yes. And so that's a, that could be another podcast, but <laugh> <laugh> the importance of an emergency fund. But because we had a fully funded emergency fund at that point, my husband had been deployed during a good chunk of 2020. And if you were in California during the lockdowns, you know that there was nothing to do. So we had a fully funded emergency fund, and instead of being scared of that bill, we were angry. And so we started advocating and we had, we took the approach of, we had to warn other families, and we just worked with Richard's command, and I would tell anyone our situation that would be willing to give me the time of day walking around our neighborhood. A long story short, the right people heard

our story and USAA did come back and pay the bill, and then they also amended their renter's insurance policy to help military families in the future that experienced this very common situation of washing machine malfunctioning is not uncommon. This, this happens. But they updated the renter's insurance policy to help cover military families in the future that had that. So that's, uh, that's one of the many lessons we've learned as a family about, you know, being aware of where your money is, because emergencies happen.

Rachael DeLeon ([05:04](#)):

They do. It's not a matter of if, it's a matter of when. Yes. Yeah. Colleen, I love that you, not only that that happened to you, but instead of just paying that or, you know, you turned it on its head and said, this shouldn't happen to anyone. And so how do I take those educational skills you have? I always say advocacy is really just another term for education and educating others, so they don't have to go through that. I think that's fantastic.

Colleen Salchow ([05:31](#)):

You know, I think we just, I kept on saying to my husband, I'm like, we, we had \$9 in our checking account and a hundred dollars in our savings when we combined finances after we got married. Had this had happened to us at the beginning of my husband's career, we would've been terrified. And we were given so many bad pieces of advice along the way that I, I just, I am grateful that it happened to us. It was not easy. It made for a very stressful piece

Rachael DeLeon ([06:00](#)):

Of, I can only imagine <laugh>,

Colleen Salchow ([06:01](#)):

But I just kept on thinking, I'm like, you know, you gotta find your why. Why am I fighting this battle? Because I'm fighting it for, you know, Colleen and Richard in 2011, 10 years prior, we would've been terrified.

Rachael DeLeon ([06:15](#)):

Yeah. Oh, I love that. Colleen, you actually have a pretty long background in education, but not personal finance from the beginning. You started your career as a special education teacher. Tell us a little bit more about what led you from special education into what you're doing now.

Colleen Salchow ([06:31](#)):

So I started my teaching career in 2007 just south of Detroit, which was a very interesting time to be a first year teacher in the metro Detroit area. And I was working with families that were impacted by the, uh, the recession, especially in the automotive industry. And I saw firsthand how valuable financial education is, but how hard it is to teach in a classroom. And so I was there from 2007 to 2011 when I married my husband. I taught one year, fourth grade in North Carolina. I learned quickly the difference in teacher pay from Michigan to North Carolina. I went from earning \$60,000 a year. I finished my master's degree, and then I went and taught fourth grade and I earned \$30,000 a year. Wow. In North Carolina. That, yeah, that big of difference with the experience I brought and the master's degree. So, and by that point, we had started our family and we had, we, we were looking at orders going overseas. And so I left the classroom and we, we were managing our finances. We had paid off all of our debt. We had \$60,000 of debt along with that \$9 in our checking account, <laugh> when we first got married. And so we were able to pay it off aggressively by using a budget and being in, you know, beans and rice, rice and beans. But I <laugh> I saw a need for financial education. So in 2019, I went through the Ramsey solutions, um,

their financial coach, mastery trainee program, and I started my business. And through that program though, I realized that I needed to have more, I needed to have more education. I, it was a good starting point for me, but I, I just, I wanted, I knew from teaching, like there's certification tests, there are, it should be hard to get a teaching license. It should be hard to become a financial coach. And I wanted to challenge myself. So I applied for the AFC Military Spouse Scholarship in 2020, and I, uh, I did not receive it. So if you ever have anybody that's like, oh, they just give those scholarships to everyone, they do not <laugh>.

Dr. Brandy Baxter ([08:55](#)):

I,

Colleen Salchow ([08:57](#)):

I did not get it. And so, but I continued, I continued to grow my business and, uh, I went to my first conference called FinCon in Orlando in 2022. And there I had the opportunity to meet and just have some great conversations by, with, uh, other AFC members and accredited financial counselors. And at that point, I just said, I, I think I applied for the scholarship one more time and did not get it again. I'm like, I'm just gonna pay for it. I'm just gonna go for it. Because what I liked about AFC was the certification aspect and maintaining the CEUs. And like, you can't just like slap this on your LinkedIn, like you have to keep it updated. And I, I also, yeah, it's like you can't just do that like these, there's a process for it. And so I liked that challenge. I also loved the conversations I was having with other AFC members because like in, you know, personal finance, there's just so many different, you know, different answers. The number one answer is, you know, what should we do? Well, it depends. And by having this network of other like-minded professionals that are following the fiduciary code of conduct, I, I, I'm just excited to be part of this community.

Dr. Brandy Baxter ([10:15](#)):

Oh my gosh, Colleen, I love the way you talked about the value of our community and membership. Many of our listeners are AFCs, they are other financial professionals. They are members of our community, and we like to say at A-F-C-P-E that there's value in having an AFC. So you spoke a little bit about the value of membership for you and why it was important for you to be part of this community. If you were to say, in your own words, what is the value of an AFC for you, what would you share with our audience?

Colleen Salchow ([10:49](#)):

For me, it was, it was a challenge to go to sit for that exam and then to go through and document all of my hours. And that challenge helped me build my confidence too. I was, when I was, when I had Salchow coaching my business, I was solopreneur. I mean, I formed the LLC, but I was a one man show. And so I wanted to challenge myself and to prove to myself that, no, you do know what you're doing. You are this, you are on the right track. And meeting so many different members along the way has also helped me make connections so that when we do move this summer to our next duty station in Virginia, I know I'll be able to connect with other people, other AFCs in person, and continue my career from there.

Rachael DeLeon ([11:35](#)):

Colleen, you mentioned a little bit about your business cell cows coaching. So I'm curious, you worked as a solopreneur for years. What made you recently decide to transition away from that?

Colleen Salchow ([11:46](#)):

I miss working with people. I miss having conversations. I,

Rachael DeLeon ([11:51](#)):

I, coworkers.

Colleen Salchow ([11:53](#)):

Coworkers, you know, like I, again, I know what it's like to eat lunch in the teacher's lounge, just to be around other people. Like, Hey, can I throw, can I brainstorm with you? Can we can, can we commiserate about the printer not working together? Like, is it, I, I miss having that team aspect of it. And I, I also, those profit loss sheets do not lie. And by looking at my profit loss sheets, I'm like, I, I'm a great financial coach. You know what? I'm not good at selling my programs. I am not good at selling my programs. I am great when you, when I can get clients on board, but putting that together with, you know, the move to Virginia, it is time for my, I wanna work in person. So we'll see. I mean, I'd love to work on a military base or maybe work at a university or maybe I just go back to substitute teaching. I really don't know what I'm gonna do when I grow up yet, but I'm gonna figure it out. And

Rachael DeLeon ([12:50](#)):

That's a really exciting time to be at. And there are so many things you can do with an AFC, you know, beyond private practice. You're right, military bases, academia, nonprofit organizations. There's so much value that you can give in different areas of the community. So I love that. That's

Dr. Brandy Baxter ([13:06](#)):

A great point that Rachel makes. You know, we here at our podcast, Real Money, real Experts. We love having the opportunity to share the real life journey of our members and our credential holders. And so, Colleen, that transparency that you just shared, I'm sure someone is listening right now thinking, I have been feeling the same way. I want to have coworkers as crazy as that may sound to others. There are those who are like, I missed that. And I, I totally appreciate you for sharing that. And I also love how you said, I took a serious look at my profit and loss statement, and I realize once I get the client, it's great, but then the selling is not my forte. <laugh>.

Colleen Salchow ([13:47](#)):

Yeah. And in business, I feel like it's so easy to spend money on your business. And my profit loss sheets were my guide. Like I to, you know, to, to pay for the AFC I, I had confidence doing it because I knew where the money was in my business. And so I I, I confidently did it at the same time, writing that check to y'all, that was a <laugh>. But like, that was <laugh>.

Dr. Brandy Baxter ([14:12](#)):

It

Colleen Salchow ([14:13](#)):

Wasn't easy, but at the same time, it was my motivation. I'm like, come on girl, you already set, you already wrote the check. Like you have made the deposit. You gotta keep going. You just keep swimming. And so I think after six years of being a business owner, I, I, I am, I'm ready to stop swimming and just someone hire me, just someone hire me to be teach financial literacy. 'cause I think it's one of the most empowering skillsets we can give to others be if they're a middle schooler or a college student or a military member. I mean, financial literacy is one of the, the, it's just so empowering because you never know when emergencies are gonna come up. But if you know where your money is, they can make those situations less stressful.

Dr. Brandy Baxter ([14:59](#)):

So listening Colleen to you talk about kind of your passion, students, kids, colleges and that whole experience, I happen to see on your LinkedIn profile that you are a student loan planner consultant. So when you think about the cost of colleges and what families are facing, what are some ways that we as practitioners can help our clients, our families that we are having conversations with? What are some ways we can help them start having a talk about planning for college costs early?

Colleen Salchow ([15:28](#)):

So I ended up doing some consulting work for a business, and I worked with them for about six months. And I, it really just gave me the opportunity to deep dive into these federal student loan programs. And what I learned was the importance of starting these conversations with your, your child, these students as early as middle school. How do you plan, you know, what do you wanna do? Because like, it goes back to the importance of having a why. So yes, your student might be an eighth grader and thinking, oh, college is way down the road. But the importance of starting these conversations now, explaining to your middle school, middle schooler, all right, these are, do you have a 529 plan? Do you have an ESA? No. What is gonna be their, what's going to be their responsibility for paying for college if they choose to go to college? Because by having these conversations in middle school and start looking at some of these actual tuition costs, the cost of living student fees, there's a website I would use with my clients called the National Center of Education Statistics. And it's a free website and, and it breaks down the, uh, the overall costs of all of these public universities, private schools. And when I would pull up these, this data for clients that I was working with, it was, they, these kids were just, their eyes were just widen so much. And you gotta remember, college is business now. And so if you are going to be sending your students to college, or they're gonna be going off to college, they have to be informed customers. So by having these conversations in eighth grade, okay, this is what, this is the money you have, you will have access to. So we need to be intentional with what classes you're taking as a high schooler so that you have the opportunity to transfer credits over. Why, you know, identifying why, why do you wanna go to college? You know, it's not just because of the fun football games on Saturdays, <laugh>, we gotta have more of this. We need to have a more of a stronger why. And also like, what do you wanna do with the degree and looking at, you know, looking on sites like Intuit and what is a teacher's making in North Carolina versus Michigan? And looking at some of these, these, these numbers. And then, you know, questioning, is it worth going to a, you know, \$50,000 a year college, you know, for four years. If you're gonna be starting out at \$30,000, is that the best school to go to? Or should we maybe be looking at a different opportunity going to a public in-state university and you would still graduate with the same degree, get the same teaching license and move went on from your life from there.

Rachael DeLeon ([18:16](#)):

Yeah. And that's a tricky balance for it's youth, like trying to, to balance the shiny things about certain universities with, with the data behind there and how do you kind of navigate those processes in a way that makes them feel part of that and, and better understand it. And I think you're right, the earlier you can start talking about that and putting it into context and terms that they can like see and understand in real time, it's really empowering. It's

Colleen Salchow ([18:44](#)):

Really the importance of normalizing these conversations about personal finances. Because the reality is we do have, you know, these college or these high school seniors that are taking out hundreds of thousands of dollars of student loans and it, it is scary, but it is the reality. And so what can you as a parent, you know, how can you support your students during that time? Parents also need to, if they've never filled out the FAFSA before, which is the federal, uh, the free application for federal student aid, start to ask questions with your high school counselors, you know, earliest freshman year. Because some, the scary thing is, or I should, I shouldn't say scary, it can be overwhelming and financial decisions that

parents are making in their student's sophomore year of high school will impact that fasted application when their student is a senior.

Dr. Brandy Baxter (19:39):

Wait, that just gave me pause. I have a freshman this year and I just thought like, wait, what, what did she just say? <laugh>?

Colleen Salchow (19:46):

Yeah. Okay,

Dr. Brandy Baxter (19:47):

Colleen, you cannot just like say that and then move on to another point because others are listening and they have freshmen this year, so educate us more, please. Let's do it.

Colleen Salchow (19:58):

Yeah. So what you're gonna look at, so one professional I met actually at FinCon, his name's Jack Wang, he has a podcast he just launched and he was the one while I was listening to his podcast, he brought that idea, these financial decisions that you make during your student sophomore year impact your fafsa because the FAFSA is typically released on October 1st. And so here you have a senior, let's take the class of 2025. So you know, the fall of 2024, the FAFSA was released and what you hear everyone say, this is one of the few things of personal finance people agree on, the sooner you submit your fafsa, the more likely you are to receive grants and scholarships. So the early bird gets the worm with the fafsa. So they will take, so 2024, they're gonna look at your taxes from 2023 taxes, follow the tax calendar, not the academic calendar. So if you look at where these seniors were in 2023, they were sophomores January of 2023 and that whole spring and their parents, so that's where we're coming up with that financial decision, that financial decision starting in January of 23, their sophomore year, how parents, you know, did they, did they sell a home? Did they sell stocks? Anything that would be on that tax filing is going to impact what access they have to FAFSA funds as seniors in high school going into college <laugh>. And so it's not to say like, don't make these decisions, it is just, I put that out there to say, be aware of it. This is just something to be aware of. And if this is, if you are a family that will be, could potentially be, you know, getting a lot of money from the fafsa, be aware of it. If you don't need to really worry about the FAFSA for your student, it's just so, you know, applying for it, submitting the application. Because so many scholarships are connected to the fafsa. I've seen numerous scholarships, like the requirement number one, have you submitted the fafsa? And if you haven't, you can't even apply for the scholarship. So just be aware of it and move on and we'll see what happens from there. There are so many different budgets, federal budgets, state budgets, school budgets that are connected to the fafsa, that there's no real way to identify, you know, what, how much should you get this year? But knowing how the process works, again, empowers families moving forward.

Rachael DeLeon (22:32):

And how impactful would it be? You know, I know more states are starting to require financial education primarily at the high school level, and it all looks different based on the state, but as your kids are going through in eighth grade, choosing their classes for high school, how can schools, you know, better engage with financial counselors and educators or start teaching that then? And not only teaching the students, but teaching the families? Because you don't think, you think about the college decision. You think maybe junior year you're starting to, you know, make the college visits, but not all of the pieces that add up. And by the time you learn this information, you know, now it's feels a little late.

Colleen Salchow (23:13):

It can feel a little late. I, you know, how do, how do schools start welcoming? It's, it's, it's touchy because it's almost like, you know, that separation of schools and family, there's only so much the schools can do. Right? But ultimately, I think it's parents starting to have these conversations with their, you know, with their students early on about where they wanna go to school. Because, you know, this is another line I got from, from Jack w Wang, is that if you, you don't start talking about how to pay for college early on, waiting until junior, sophomore or senior year, someone is going to cry at that kitchen table. Mm-hmm <affirmative>. Mm-hmm <affirmative> It's either the student or it's either the parents and you just want, you wanna avoid the tears. And the reality is it's like, okay, well this is what we're looking at. This is what, what you have and these are what are your desires as a parent? What have you learned about student loans as a parent that you can now, you know, open that conversation about what have the, the people within your community learned about student loans and, you know, normalizing those conversations about the pros, the mistakes they've made with the student loans. And maybe the, there are also benefits too, because it does allow you to pay for school.

Rachael DeLeon ([24:32](#)):

Well, Colleen, you are a parent and also a financial educator and coach. And so you've worked with students is your own kids. I'm curious as a parent or what you would tell parents, how do you strike a balance between guiding your teens financially, but also allowing them to make their own mistakes along the way?

Colleen Salchow ([24:53](#)):

Don't take away a learning opportunity from your teenager. I was working with eighth grader over one summer and I loved working with the teenagers and, and middle schoolers in the summer. 'cause then they weren't worried about like, you know, math homework or anything. They could just focus on this material. And she, this eighth grader wanted a pair of Nikes and she was determined, I'm buying these Nikes. And her mom was like, yeah, I'm not paying \$150 while you're in the middle of a growth spurt. Mm-hmm <affirmative>. Like, this is not

Rachael DeLeon ([25:26](#)):

<laugh>. I have this conversation quite often with my 13-year-old.

Colleen Salchow ([25:30](#)):

My mom was like, and you know, the daughter was like, well, we have the money. But the mom was like that. Well, first off, it's my money. And secondly, and that's, I, those are the, I would just sit there and I'd be like, okay, yeah, these are good, healthy conversations. Okay, Uhhuh <affirmative>. So this eighth grader became one of the top babysitters in our neighborhood. And so she was like, I am earning my own money. And the mom was like, oh, okay. And so she, this, she was focused, this eighth grader was like, I'm gonna buy my own shoes. And she went to volleyball practice one one day during the summer. It's here in South Carolina and it's hot down here. I I know you vacation here in the summer. It's hot. During the summer she was coming back from volleyball practice and drove and was going past the community swimming pool. And she's like, Ugh, I'm so hot. I'm just gonna go jump in the pool. I'm just gonna go jump in the pool. And this eighth grader went and jumped in the pool and that's fine until she realized that her cell phone was in her pocket.

Rachael DeLeon ([26:30](#)):

Oh no.

Colleen Salchow ([26:32](#)):

She was like, oh my gosh. And she came back and their mom and dad were like, all right, it happens. The, that was an accident. Could it have been prevented though? Yes, it could probably, you could have taken that cell phone outta your pocket. You didn't need to jump in the pool with your volleyball clues on. Like, there were different ways that this could have been. The cell phone ending up in the pool could have been avoided. And so the parents let her have that teachable moment and they're like, we're not gonna pay for a new cell phone that could have been prevented. And so she had a choice to make. She either was gonna buy the, the Nikes or take the money from the Nikes and get and replace the cell phone. And she chose to replace the cell phone. And I, and I, you know, worked with her the following week and she was bummed and frustrated, but she's like, but I'm grateful I had the money.

Colleen Salchow (27:30):

So she didn't realize it at the time, but she was, yeah, she had the emergency fund. I'm like, and we had that conversation during that. So I'm like, that's kind like the emergency fund right there. And a couple months later she was, I ran into her and she goes, I'm so glad I didn't buy the shoes. My foot grew another size <laugh>. So even if I did buy 'em in August, they wouldn't have fit. And so I'm still saving up for 'em, but maybe my mom was right, like maybe I should like call mom was right. <laugh>, maybe,

Dr. Brandy Baxter (28:01):

Maybe,

Colleen Salchow (28:02):

Maybe she was right. I mean, like we're, she's still in eighth grade, we're gonna give her that we're eighth grade, we're still. So that's my advice for parents. Let, don't take that oppor that those learning experiences away. If you say you gotta get, you know, A's and B's on the report card in order to get the new video game and they come home with a C on the report card, follow through, follow through, whatever it is. And also the importance, I think going back to that client teaching kids how to earn money early on, eighth graders babysitting yard work, walking the dogs, you know, raking leaves, shoveling snow wave, you're in the north. Like there are so many different ways that they can earn money even as a middle schooler.

Dr. Brandy Baxter (28:47):

Yeah, that's such a great point. We have something similar in our household and it was a pain to set up all the guidelines and what I was gonna pay for the different things. But you are so right when the chores were not done or when the assignment was not done, I didn't have to shell out any money <laugh>. Right. It was a great teachable lesson for my kiddos. Colleen, I kind of feel like we have covered a lot of different topics with you and I appreciate your transparency in all of them. And one of the things that we like to talk about here on the show, and our listeners are familiar with this, so we like to call it our 2 cents. And so Rachel and I think of all of the knowledge that we have gathered from our attendees on our show, like the thing of it is putting it in a bank. And so as we are kind of putting everything together in this bank, every guest is invited to give their 2 cents. So if you had to think about what would you like to add to our bank of knowledge, what would be your 2 cents, Colleen?

Colleen Salchow (29:47):

My favorite lessons that I would do with my middle schoolers and young adults was the power of compound interest. And so when you are working with your students, or even if you're working with, you know, a friend who is just coming back to budgeting for whatever reason, going on, you know, investor.gov, it's a free website and using their compound interest calculator and just show you get to see the visual of how, you know, contributing to, uh, an account like a Roth IRA or something little by little, but from an early age. So especially with, you know, high school students and college students, the

importance of okay, are do you have earned income? Did you, that you file taxes with, you know, an employer? If you have earned income, you can open this Roth IRA and contribute \$50 or, you know, \$25, whatever it the minimum is per month. And the power of that, starting that habit from an early age over the course of 40 years. How, how powerful time is when it comes to compound interest.

Rachael DeLeon ([30:51](#)):

I love it, Brandy. We're both like, Hmm, <laugh>, we

Dr. Brandy Baxter ([30:55](#)):

Agree, this is what happens when we've been doing the show together for so long. We're like, Hmm. That's a moment. <laugh>.

Rachael DeLeon ([31:02](#)):

Colleen, thank you so much for coming on the show today and for taking the time to connect with us. It was so fun to, to get to know you a little bit better and I, I love your evolution from teaching and to financial education and I've been so excited as you start on this new journey to Virginia this summer and wish you all the best of luck.

Colleen Salchow ([31:21](#)):

Thank you.

Rachael DeLeon ([31:22](#)):

Colleen, can you tell our listeners, for those who listen to the show today, what is the best way they can connect with you?

Colleen Salchow ([31:27](#)):

Right now? The best way to connect with me is on LinkedIn. I still have my active page there. That would be the best way to connect with me.

Rachael DeLeon ([31:35](#)):

Well, thanks Colleen.

Colleen Salchow ([31:36](#)):

Thanks for having me.

Dr. Brandy Baxter ([31:37](#)):

Oh, Racheal, listening to Colleen one share her tales of being a military spouse, it brought back memories for me and she was spot on about the importance of having an emergency fund, not only as a military family, but I think all of our clients, all of the families we work with could benefit from just reminding and remembering the value of having that emergency fund. And oh my gosh, the story about the washing machine, it made me wanna say, okay, I need to check my own policy to make sure that it's covered <laugh>.

Rachael DeLeon ([32:12](#)):

Yeah. Oh, I love that story. And I just, to me that's a perfect reminder that when things like that happen, we have an opportunity to make it better for those around us. And it kind of changes the lens of how we

look at what we're going through. And obviously she was in a point in her life where she could weather that storm a little bit better. And to be able to pay it forward for future service members or individuals that may, may have that happen in the future is, is really tremendous. The other thing I love about talking to Colleen today is a little selfish because I mean, you and I are both in that season of life with our children and <laugh> just getting to hear some of those stories. I think it's really important when we talk about financial education, we always say like, how do we be authentic and vulnerable and talk about personal finance and that, you know, obviously with our clients, but really how do we start to open up and break down those barriers when our children are young? So it just becomes second nature to learn about that and to make mistakes when, when they're still under our wing where the mistakes aren't as hard if they make them, you know, later in life. And so I just love those trial and error opportunities that we can give our kids as as they look to the future.

Dr. Brandy Baxter ([33:24](#)):

Yes, indeed. And as we approach my daughter's sophomore year, I am definitely paying attention to our financial decisions. <laugh>

Rachael DeLeon ([33:33](#)):

Love it. The opinions of our podcast guests are their own, which means that their stories, views, or lived experiences may differ from yours or mine. However, the one thing you will always find on this show is a common thread. Our guests in it about helping people with their money to improve their lives and they believe in upholding high standards for the clients and the communities that they serve. We encourage you to tune in to real money, real experts with open curiosity. Why? Because it's oftentimes in the conversations where viewpoints or stories differ from our own that we learn the most.